

EVALUATION REPORT FOR THE STATE OF GEORGIA

In Response to LSC Program Letter 2000-7

MISSION STATEMENT

Since 1999, the Joint Oversight Committee, composed of board members from Georgia Legal Services Program (GLSP) and Atlanta Legal Aid Society (ALAS), have overseen efforts to develop a single, unified statewide delivery system tailored to the legal needs of Georgia's poor. These efforts continue to be guided by the mission statement adopted early in the planning process:

Our mission is to build statewide conviction that the civil legal needs of all poor persons in Georgia must be met by the legal profession and the broader citizenry.

Initially, the planning process focused primarily on the two LSC-funded programs. Over time, as the Committee's understanding of the state planning process and its purposes deepened, we began to realize that planning from a genuine statewide perspective would require the participation and active involvement of more stakeholders.

Therefore, we invited the State Bar's Access to Justice Committee to work with us in developing a statewide plan. With our new planning partner on board, we have begun to compile a list of other stakeholders we hope will become active participants in state planning. We are confident that the partnership between the Oversight Committee and the Access to Justice Committee will enrich the planning process and result in increased services for the poor throughout the State.

INTRODUCTION

While Georgia's two LSC-funded programs are not the only components of the statewide delivery system, historically they have been the core of the efforts to meet the civil legal needs of the State's low income populations. Fortunately, the two programs always have had a special cooperative relationship. Even before either was funded by LSC, the two programs jointly litigated issues that had statewide impact. Their joint efforts included successful challenges to the State's limitations on Medicaid coverage, the State's failure to meet the federal standard of promptness for providing food stamps and welfare benefits, and the administration of the State's justice of the peace system.

Currently, the two programs are working jointly to enforce the U.S. Supreme Court's *Olmstead* decision, a Georgia case requiring states to provide community-based care for mentally disabled persons so they may become integrated into the community. Joint efforts also are under way in two other areas, one relating to predatory mortgage lending practices and the other relating to defective and untimely benefit-termination notices provided by state welfare agencies. The two programs recently collaborated in the preparation and filing of an *amicus curiae* brief in a consumer case to be decided by the Georgia Supreme Court.

These joint litigation efforts stem from the longstanding practice of bringing case handlers from both programs together to discuss legal problems common to clients throughout the State. Beginning as far back as the 1970's, the two organizations addressed statewide issues through a combined program of legislative and administrative advocacy. Using a joint staff person, case handlers and clients from both programs were surveyed to identify priority issues that would be the focus of the advocacy. That effort continued until LSC restrictions dramatically limited such activities.

A joint training program, also dating back to the mid-1970's, continues to foster statewide responses to statewide legal problems. Coordinated by a joint staff member, the training program includes an annual training event, "Legal Services University," as well as joint task forces on various substantive issues of statewide impact. Other areas of statewide cooperation that continue to flourish include statewide pro bono efforts, grant applications, technology improvements, and case referrals. Some of these coordinated efforts will be set out in more detail in response to specific questions.

Early efforts to implement LSC's state planning directives focused primarily on the two LSC-funded programs' long history of statewide cooperation and their efforts to improve and expand that cooperation. The initial state planning report submitted in 1998 reflected that focus. Willie Abrams, LSC's program officer, responded to that report in August of 1999. While recognizing the long and productive history of collaboration between GLSP and ALAS, Mr. Abrams strongly urged the two organizations to focus their cooperative efforts in three particular areas: technology, intake and resource development. In response, the two programs convened the Joint Oversight Committee to develop plans for the implementation of Mr. Abrams' suggestions and to oversee state planning efforts. The Oversight Committee summarized its progress in these areas in its report to LSC in April of 2000. The Committee received no formal response to its report, but, based on subsequent informal feedback from LSC, the Oversight Committee continued to focus primarily on coordinating efforts between the two programs in the three areas identified by Mr. Abrams. At the same time, the Committee considered how to gain the participation of other stakeholders in the state planning process.

LSC's report on *Building State Justice Communities* helped sharpen the Oversight Committee's focus on the importance of having a widely inclusive statewide commission overseeing the state planning process. Although not all of the states recognized in the report for their state planning successes had such a body, the majority did. The importance of what LSC has since called a "Designated State Planning Body" was further highlighted in LSC's Program Letter 01-4, issued July 19, 2001.

The Oversight Committee believes that its initial focus on coordination of services between the two LSC programs was appropriate in the early stages of the planning process. However, Program Letter 01-4 and the LSC study point in a somewhat different direction, one that the Oversight Committee believes is the right next step for Georgia. Therefore, as mentioned at the outset of this report, the Oversight Committee asked the State Bar's Access to Justice Committee to work with us in coordinating the involvement of other stakeholders in a broader planning process.

The Access to Justice (ATJ) Committee seemed the appropriate group because its mission - - to maximize legal services for the poor by promoting pro bono programs and supporting legal aid organizations - - meshes perfectly with the objectives of state planning. The ATJ Committee, which includes judges, law professors, providers of specialized legal services, pro bono program leaders, and a wide variety of other stakeholders, has been involved in efforts to expand the delivery of civil legal services to the poor. For example, the ATJ Committee was the entity through which the President of the State Bar initiated the first successful effort in 25 years to obtain state funding for the delivery of civil legal services. That effort resulted in a \$2 million appropriation in 1998 and in each succeeding year for new and expanded services for victims of domestic violence. Lessons learned from that campaign were shared with other state bar leaders at a regional planning meeting in New Orleans.

The ATJ Committee also took the lead in getting the State Bar to adopt voluntary reporting of pro bono activities by Georgia attorneys. At the State Bar Annual meeting each year, the ATJ Committee confers two significant awards for pro bono activities. Additionally, the ATJ Committee has been working to develop a statewide “message campaign” to raise the profile of legal services organizations. This effort is aided by the fact that the ATJ Chair serves on the national advisory board for the Project for the Future of Legal Services message campaign research. Other ways in which the ATJ Committee has helped to expand the delivery of civil legal services will be described later in this report.

The Oversight Committee believes that stepping up statewide planning by actively involving the ATJ Committee in the process is the logical next step in working toward our goals. As discussed below, the Access to Justice Committee and the Oversight Committee are in the process of compiling a list of stakeholders and establishing subcommittees in specific areas where the greatest needs seem to exist.

I. TO WHAT EXTENT HAS A COMPREHENSIVE, INTEGRATED AND CLIENT-CENTERED LEGAL SERVICES DELIVERY SYSTEM BEEN ACHIEVED IN GEORGIA?

1. A Multitude of Critical Issues Affect Low Income Individuals in Georgia.

Accurately identifying the most critical legal issues affecting the State’s low income populations is a prerequisite to providing client-centered services. Annual assessments conducted by ALAS and GLSP, as well as informal input from other legal services providers in the State, identify a multitude of issues affecting Georgia’s poor. Some of these issues, such as family, education and consumer problems, affect poor residents all across the State. Other problems, such as those faced by migrant farmworkers, are confined to the rural and agricultural regions of the State, while still other issues, such as homelessness and concentrations of non-English-speaking populations, are more common in the urban areas of the State. These and other needs of the poor are described more fully below. Efforts to address these needs are described later in this report.

Family: This includes assistance with divorce, child custody, child support, and other financial and support issues; temporary protective orders and other family violence issues; and adoptions for grandparents and other relatives who are raising children who are not their own.

Housing: This includes access to decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing; landlord-tenant disputes; homelessness; and the loss of one's home or apartment due to eviction, foreclosure or other problems.

Health and Public Benefits: This includes access to appropriate health care and other public benefits; the needs of those infected with the HIV virus or other serious illnesses; the needs of institutionalized persons, including access to community care and protection from unnecessary medication and restraint; and the needs of residents of nursing homes and personal care homes, including protection from abuse, neglect, unsafe conditions or wrongful discharge.

Education: This includes assistance in gaining access to special education and related services.

Employment: This includes assistance with job loss and unemployment compensation, as well as the many needs of migrant farmworkers, who have special issues related to language and cultural barriers.

Individual Rights: This includes protection from discrimination based on race, gender, disability and other prohibited categories in housing, public services and employment.

Consumer Issues: This includes protection against foreclosure, predatory lending, consumer fraud, unlawful debts and debt collection.

Non-English-Speaking Populations: The Spanish-speaking and other non-English-speaking populations concentrated in metro Atlanta and other parts of the State face special barriers in seeking assistance with their legal needs. Not only are they unable to speak English, they also do not understand the American legal system.

2. Georgia's Legal Services Delivery System, Though Coordinated Only Informally, Serves the State's Poor Population Remarkably Well.

To our knowledge, this state planning initiative is the first time that the delivery of legal services to the poor populations in Georgia has been looked at from the perspective of a statewide "system." Examined in this new light, four components seem to comprise the legal services delivery system in Georgia. Those four components are: (1) the State's two LSC-funded programs, (2) the private bar, (3) nonprofit organizations that specialize in specific legal issues or serve specific populations, and (4) funding sources that help to support legal services providers. Considering that historically these elements have been coordinated only informally, they seem to serve the State's poor populations remarkably well. The delivery system's effectiveness is attributable in large part to the strength of the two LSC-funded programs and the active support of the private bar.

State planning has provided a useful vehicle for considering how the "legal services delivery system" can be made even better. Our progress in doing so is described elsewhere in this report. Meanwhile, the four components of the delivery system are described below.

LSC-Funded Programs. ALAS and GLSP are well known to LSC, having been LSC grant recipients for many years. Detailed information about ALAS and GLSP can be found in

the grant applications recently submitted by both programs to request continuation of LSC funding. Only a few highlights are presented here.

Atlanta Legal Aid, founded in 1924, serves five urban counties in and around Atlanta. It operates out of four offices and has a staff of 100. Georgia Legal Services serves the State's remaining 154 counties. It operates 12 full-time offices and has 200 budgeted positions. Both programs have efficient telephone intake systems and provide a full array of legal services, from brief service to full representation.

The programs operate two statewide hotlines--one on landlord tenant issues, the other on issues affecting seniors. Specialized staff serve vulnerable populations such as seniors, victims of domestic violence, persons with mental disabilities, persons with AIDS/HIV, migrant farmworkers, and non-English speaking immigrants. Both programs devote resources to the cultivation of volunteer lawyers; GLSP partners with the State Bar of Georgia to support a statewide Pro Bono Project. The programs cooperate in training, task forces, use of senior attorneys, and impact work.

Private Bar. The second component of the legal services delivery system is the private bar. Attorneys in private practice are the second largest source of legal services for the poor after GLSP and ALAS. Thousands of Georgia attorneys regularly accept pro bono cases from the two LSC programs and other sources. Organized pro bono efforts are coordinated at the state level by the Pro Bono Project. The Pro Bono Project, which has two staff members, publicizes pro bono opportunities, solicits volunteers and forwards their names to local programs. The Pro Bono Project was in the forefront of successful efforts to persuade the State Bar to adopt an aspirational goal of 40 hours of pro bono work per year for all Georgia lawyers and a voluntary system for reporting pro bono activities. The Pro Bono Project further expanded the availability of legal services to the poor by helping to form A Business Commitment ("ABC") Committee, which matches transactional lawyers with community-based organizations that are in need of legal services. Ongoing activities of the Pro Bono Project are overseen by the State Bar's Access to Justice Committee.

The State also has a network of local pro bono projects. The Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation (AVLF) is an independent and separately funded pro bono program created by the Atlanta Bar in conjunction with ALAS. Representatives of the Atlanta Bar, the Gate City Bar (an African-American bar), the Hispanic Bar Association and the Asian Bar are among those who serve on AVLF's Board. AVLF coordinates the Saturday Morning Lawyers program as well as domestic violence and guardian ad litem projects, all of which depend upon volunteer attorneys. A similar program, the DeKalb Volunteer Lawyers Program (DVLf), jointly sponsored by the DeKalb Bar and ALAS, operates in a county adjacent to Atlanta. ALAS also administers its own pro bono programs in the three offices not served by AVLF or DVLf. Likewise, GLSP administers pro bono programs in each of its regional offices.

The collaboration of the State Bar Pro Bono Project and the other pro bono providers in the State with other entities has resulted in constant innovations and expansions in delivery of legal services. For example, earlier this year the Younger Lawyers Division (YLD) of the State Bar, collaborating with the Pro Bono Project, launched a "Pro Bono Initiative" to encourage every lawyer in the State to take a pro bono case during a specific week. Attorneys across the state were invited to ALAS and GLSP offices to take cases, and private attorneys conducted

community education sessions on issues related to consumer law and senior issues. The Pro Bono Initiative earned the YLD first place in the “Public” Division of the Awards of Achievement competition at the recent American Bar Association annual meeting in Chicago.

The State Bar’s Pro Bono Project sponsors a Pro Bono Conference each year. Invitations are extended to a wide audience of providers and stakeholders, including representatives of the LSC programs, the various pro bono programs throughout the State, bar leaders, and other interested organizations, such as the Homeless Clinic and Catholic Social Services, which also recruit attorneys to handle cases on a pro bono basis.

Over the years, the State Bar, GLSP, ALAS and AVLF have developed excellent resources that assist volunteers with their pro bono cases. Handbooks on various substantive issues, including domestic violence, landlord tenant law and consumer law, are available from the State Bar’s website, along with a list of legal services providers and current training opportunities. Pro bono opportunities are publicized on the GLSP/ALAS joint website and in State Bar publications. Repeat participants are publicly acknowledged.

Specialized Organizations. The third component of the legal services delivery system consists of the many nonprofit organizations that provide legal services for specific groups of low-income or special-needs clients. Some of these organizations focus on specific issues, such as homelessness or battered women. Others focus on specific populations, such as Hispanics, Asians or migrant farmers. Not all of these organizations operate on a statewide basis.

Organizations with a statewide service area include the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia (civil liberties cases); the Southern Center for Human Rights, (prison/jail conditions and death penalty cases); the Georgia Advocacy Office (cases on behalf of persons with developmental disabilities and persons with mental illness); and the Hispanic Bar Association and the Georgia Asian-Pacific Bar Association, which have developed clinics or referral programs. The Disability Law and Policy Center (DLPC), which receives IOLTA funding, collaborates with ALAS and GLSP to serve disabled individuals who are currently institutionalized but who might be entitled to community-based services as a result of the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Olmstead* decision. The Georgia Access to Justice Project (GAJP), which also receives IOLTA funding, engages in legislative advocacy, supports representation of female prisoners in child custody matters, and facilitates collaborative work among stakeholders in Georgia’s statewide justice community. The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, a national organization, recruits volunteer attorneys to take cases involving civil rights issues throughout Georgia. The Lawyers Committee often collaborates with GLSP and ALAS on cases, most recently in Gainesville, Griffin, and Early County, Georgia. The Southern Poverty Law Center, based in Alabama, provides resources to assist private attorneys in handling cases referred by GLSP, including class actions and certain cases for farmworkers. The Georgia Indigent Defense Council funds projects in certain counties for lawyers appointed to represent parties in neglect, deprivation and other juvenile court cases. The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) will be opening a regional office in Atlanta in 2002 with plans for three staff attorneys. It will serve clients in Georgia and other southeastern states. The MALDEF director has contacted the directors of GLSP and ALAS and other stakeholders, and will be invited to join the Access to Justice Committee.

Other specialized legal services providers include Catholic Social Services and the Latin American Association, both of which represent low income persons in immigration matters. Some of the State's shelters for battered women have access to attorneys who help low income clients obtain temporary protective orders. The Georgia Law Center for the Homeless represents homeless clients on housing and benefits issues. Georgia State Law School has a clinic for income tax problems for the poor.

Localized legal resources, available in some parts of rural Georgia, include domestic violence task forces, lay advocates, solicitors and district attorneys (elder abuse and domestic violence cases); nursing home ombudspersons; neighborhood justice centers (alternative dispute resolution services); and the University of Georgia Law School Clinic (domestic violence matters in two counties). GLSP collaborates with all of these entities and others in planning and delivering legal services in rural Georgia.

Funding Sources. The fourth component of the legal services delivery system consists of federal, state and local government agencies, as well as individuals, foundations, corporations and other organizations that provide financial support for the delivery of civil legal services to the poor. In addition to financial support, funding sources function informally as a mechanism for ensuring that the delivery system directs its resources to areas of genuine need, avoids duplication of existing services and demonstrates measurable outcomes. The Oversight Committee considers one of its most important objectives to be the expansion of funding and funding sources for the legal services delivery system. Efforts directed at achieving this objective will be discussed in greater detail later in this report.

3. While Potentially of Great Value, a Uniform Assessment Protocol Has Not Yet Been Developed.

While ALAS and GLSP already use a variety of assessment tools, many of which are quite similar to the ABA Standards and the LSC Performance Criteria, there is no uniform assessment protocol in use throughout the entire legal services delivery system. The Oversight Committee recognizes the potential value of such an approach but, for several practical reasons, has not yet attempted to develop such a protocol. First of all, many funding sources require their recipients to use specific assessment measures unique to the funding source. United Way, for example, has developed its own assessment criteria that recipients must satisfy. Likewise, foundations, corporations and government bodies all prefer to dictate their own method for assessing the success of the projects to which they contribute resources.

Moreover, the Oversight Committee is aware that two of its major funding sources, LSC and the Georgia Bar Foundation, are considering new measurement tools. The Bar Foundation, which administers the Georgia IOLTA program, has begun to experiment with outcome measures for assessing legal services. At an outcomes training session held last year, the Bar Foundation encouraged all of its recipients to provide program logic models with their grant applications.

Considering the complexity involved in developing a comprehensive assessment instrument and the possibility that LSC and the Bar Foundation may introduce new measurement tools in the near future, the Committee felt that any assessment protocol that it might develop would end up having to be replaced almost as soon as it was implemented. The Committee felt,

too, that it would be beneficial to have the Access to Justice Committee involved in developing any assessment method.

4. The Delivery System Strives to Make Legal Services Available to Clients on an Equitable Basis Across the State.

Numerous approaches are part of the effort to make legal services available on an equitable basis throughout the State. These approaches are described below. New initiatives are detailed in Section II.

Phone-Based Intake. Legal services providers throughout the State rely heavily on the telephone for managing intake and providing advice. Telephone calls within metro Atlanta are local calls, and all of the GLSP offices have toll-free 800 numbers for clients. Special arrangements are made for the hearing and speech impaired and those who do not speak English. The Georgia Relay System enables individuals with hearing or speech impairments to communicate by phone. Non-English speakers are accommodated through the use of Language Line and Spanish-speaking personnel.

Hotlines. Telephone hotlines help to meet the high volume of requests for brief service, advice, and referrals. A toll-free, statewide Landlord/Tenant Housing Hotline, operated by GLSP, helps meet the enormous need for information about the rights of tenants and landlords. Besides general information, the Housing Hotline provides referral information so those needing more help have a specific place to go. A second statewide hotline, the Seniors Legal Hotline, run by ALAS, provides seniors with information, advice and brief service in areas of concern to them.

Accessible Offices. While many clients seek services by phone, others need to be served in person. Therefore, all program offices provide easy client access. Each office or unit maintains regular screening hours at least three days a week. In counties that do not have an ALAS or GLSP office, the programs do outreach at central locations. By screening cases, program lawyers can tailor particular services to the needs of each client in a cost effective manner. When full representation is not available or necessary, brief service, referral or self-help advice is offered.

Referrals. Potential clients do not always know which service provider is best suited to provide assistance with their problem. That is why referrals from one organization to another are so important. Most organizations in Georgia have an intake process that allows them to determine what the individual's legal problem is, what kind of service will be needed, and whether the service falls within the organization's mission or priorities. If the individual seems to have a legitimate legal claim but not one that the particular organization can handle, the individual may be referred to another provider.

Bilingual Services. A number of measures have been implemented throughout the State to serve the needs of non-English-speaking populations. For example, ALAS has a special Spanish hotline for Hispanic callers in Atlanta, and GLSP has Spanish-speaking staff in several of its offices. Since last year, GLSP and ALAS have jointly contracted with Language Line, a service that quickly locates individuals who are able to serve as translators for non-English-speaking clients. Asian and Hispanic organizations in metro Atlanta have solicited the

participation of local attorneys in conducting educational programs designed to acquaint immigrants with the American legal system. Despite these efforts, legal services providers need more lawyers and other legal personnel who are bilingual. This has presented a challenge because legal services providers cannot compete with the salaries offered by large law firms. Incentives, like the special bonus GLSP pays to bilingual staff members, help but do not solve the problem.

Migrant Farmworkers. Migrant farmers are a particularly vulnerable population of low income individuals. GLSP's Migrant Project provides affirmative outreach to these clients. Ongoing efforts to increase access to services are set out in Section II.

Residents of Nursing Homes and Personal Care Homes. Georgia has a comprehensive statewide system for responding to the needs of persons in nursing homes and personal care homes. The system is coordinated by a State Ombudsman (a former ALAS staff attorney) and includes a statewide network of ombudsmen providers. Ombudsmen respond to complaints from persons in nursing homes and personal care homes and assess conditions in those homes. Many of the ombudsmen are on the staff of GLSP or ALAS.

Seniors. In addition to the Statewide Seniors Hotline described earlier, a Title III Elderly Legal Assistance Provider (ELAP) is designated for each area of the State. ELAPs provide legal backup to ombudsman programs around the State and are the most common place to which cases are referred. Most ELAPs are staffed by members of ALAS or GLSP. A Legal Services Developer (a former GLSP staff attorney) in the State Division on Aging coordinates the ELAPs and also plans and implements annual conferences, training events, mailings, and e-mail alerts.

Individuals with Disabilities. Both legal services programs place a special emphasis on serving clients with disabilities. ALAS has two special health units, one representing clients with AIDS and other disabling diseases, and the other representing clients with mental health problems. GLSP has a health law specialist and a mental health specialist attorney, who serve as resources for GLSP staff and other advocates throughout the State. In addition, the Georgia Advocacy Office represents clients with mental and physical disabilities. Work is coordinated through task forces and training. Outreach efforts are directed toward disabled populations at institutions and hospitals, as well as those who are homebound due to a disability. Increases in relative access to services is described in Section II.

Websites. As more and more legal services providers develop websites, the Internet becomes an increasingly valuable means of expanding access to legal services. Although low income people may not own computers, they can gain access to the Internet by means of computers located in public libraries and public schools. The State Bar website (www.gabar.org) provides links to GLSP, ALAS, and many other legal service providers. More details on the combined ALAS/GLSP Website are provided in the next section.

Pro Se Support. The two LSC-funded programs in Georgia have always provided some support for low income pro se litigants to supplement the assistance given by court personnel. In many counties, local courts accept form pleadings developed by ALAS and GLSP. In the last several years, courts in the State's most populous counties have been overwhelmed with pro se litigants. New initiatives for responding to these needs for assistance are described in Section II.

Community Outreach and Education. Educational programs and materials are an important means of reaching potential clients. Both GLSP and ALAS have active community education programs covering core poverty law issues of interest to the poor. These programs are offered at locations geared to reaching the targeted population. Community education materials covering dozens of topics are available online and are distributed at numerous locations where potential clients are likely to be. Brochures and informational sheets, covering topics such as divorce, domestic violence, child custody, and landlord/tenant issues, are provided to callers with problems in these areas. GLSP provides financial and other kinds of support to the Georgia Clients Council, a statewide organization composed of clients and organizations aligned with clients. The Council, which has local and regional offices in many parts of the State, provides information and workshops on recognizing and responding to legal problems.

Community Economic Development. Community groups help to develop affordable housing, create jobs and job training programs, provide services for children and youth, support economic self-sufficiency and microenterprise development, preserve community land and cultural resources. GLSP has expanded its CED practice to meet the legal needs of these groups. This is described in more detail in a later section.

Other Special Needs. Special arrangements are made to serve persons with access barriers related to transportation, hours of employment, disabilities, confinement, or language barriers.

5. The Delivery System in Georgia Uses Technology to Increase Access, Services, Communication and Collaboration.

Using technology to increase access and enhance service to clients throughout the State has been a focus of state planning from the beginning. Early in the planning process, the Oversight Committee created a Joint Technology Committee to focus specifically on statewide technology issues. By that time, both LSC programs had installed computer systems that gave all case handlers and support staff access to desk top word processing, e-mail, the Internet, Lexis and other legal research materials. Besides enhancing communication and coordination within an organization, the new technology facilitates communication and collaboration among organizations in ways that previously were impossible. Further, technology has increased efficiency by allowing intake information to be entered directly into the computer and reports of various kinds to be computer-generated. Time saved as a result of these efficiencies can be used to serve clients.

The most significant specific accomplishment of the Technology Committee was the establishment of a joint web page for GLSP and ALAS (www.legalaid-ga.org). The joint web page enables the two programs to increase the distribution of legal information to clients, to create a shared database, and to provide an additional opportunity for volunteering and making donations. An LSC Technology Initiative (TI) grant, awarded jointly to the two programs in 2001, will enable them to create a standardized joint website that has the features found in the Minnesota template of Probono.net. This is the website template that LSC has recommended.

Websites of other organizations also provide access to information about legal services for the poor. For example, the State Bar's website hosts the website for the Pro Bono Project. The websites for GLSP, ALAS and other civil pro bono providers have links to the Pro Bono

Project. The Pro Bono Project also hosts five specialized listervs to facilitate communication among programs and volunteers. A new website has been developed by the State Bar Younger Lawyers Division in conjunction with the Pro Bono Project. The new website gives volunteers across the State access to practice handbooks on wills and estates, family law, domestic violence, consumer law and landlord/tenant law.

Another very significant technology project is the Internet Domestic Violence Court Preparation Project (the IDV Project) initiated through a collaboration among GLSP, LSC's Inspector General, and the Fund for the City of New York. The first of its kind in the nation, it is now being replicated in other states. This project gives victims of domestic violence an efficient and effective way to prepare the pleadings they need to seek a temporary protective order. In Georgia, this project has had the salutary benefit of gradually inducing the court system to use a standard set of forms for protective orders and supporting documents. The State Supreme Court recently adopted standard orders that can be enforced anywhere in the nation to provide comprehensive relief for victims of family violence. These standard orders were drafted by the Family Violence Commission, based on GLSP/IDV Project forms and with GLSP/IDV Project staff help. Among other benefits, these forms can be used in connection with the State's TPO registry, which facilitates statewide enforcement of temporary protective orders. Further, the project stimulates the development of new working relationships with shelter providers and enhances collaborations with existing sites.

With the backing of ALAS, GLSP also applied for, but was not awarded, a TI grant that would have been used to develop web-based technology for delivering legal assistance to clients through the Internet. The project would have improved communications through the use of high speed lines, supported development of a web-based management database, and created the infrastructure to support a statewide website. It was hoped that the technology could have been a model for other providers around the State. Consideration will be given to applying again for this project in the coming year.

ALAS would have used a small portion of the TI grant to create a Georgia Technology Exchange Project (TEP), modeled in part on the ABA TEP. Even though LSC funding was denied, ALAS has found an Atlanta law firm that is willing to support this project by funding a fellow who will develop the program. Like the ABA's TEP, the Georgia TEP will encourage the State's large law firms to donate their used computer equipment when they are upgrading their systems. The Georgia TEP will go beyond the ABA's TEP by making used computers available to community groups, like shelters, that collaborate with legal services providers. Because more than half of the computers donated through the ABA project came from Atlanta law firms, ALAS expects the TEP to provide many provider organizations with Internet capability, including access to information on the GLSP/ALAS joint website. Clients will benefit from this project because they will have Internet access in more confidential settings than public libraries or schools. In addition, the Georgia TEP will ask the large law firms to make technology support personnel available to help non-profit service providers on projects such as setting up networks and creating websites.

6. Significant Increases in Resources Have Led to Expanded Client Services.

The Oversight Committee is gratified to report a significant increase in the resources available to serve the legal needs of low income people. Unrestricted income has increased from

both IOLTA and the private bar. In 1998, for instance, IOLTA grants primarily aimed at support of civil legal services amounted to \$2.25 million; this year such grants are likely to amount to \$3.1 million. Private bar donations to the two LSC programs also have increased significantly. Three years ago, the private bar donated about \$900,000; this year donations should exceed \$1.4 million. Private bar funding for other providers also increased with the development of a private bar campaign among associates of large Atlanta law firms.

Funding for vulnerable populations also has increased substantially. The most notable increase is the State Legislature's appropriation of \$2 million for victims of family violence, which was mentioned in the introduction to this report. Enacted in 1998, the first year the request was made, the \$2 million appropriation serves low income victims of family violence across the State. This remarkable accomplishment was the result of an initiative undertaken by the State Bar through the Access to Justice Committee, together with the two LSC programs and other stakeholders. As a result of this initiative, over \$1.5 million in new funds have been awarded annually to ALAS and GLSP to serve clients in their respective service areas. Additional funds have been awarded to other stakeholders such as DVLF and domestic violence shelters that have lay advocates or private attorneys under contract to serve specific victim populations. Federal grants awarded under the Violence Against Women Act and the Victims of Crime Act enable ALAS, GLSP and other organizations to provide additional services for this same population.

Funding for the representation of seniors also has increased. The Senior Legal Hotline has been providing advice and brief service to seniors across the State since 1998. Funding for the Hotline began with a grant under the Older American Act's hotline program. This initial grant expired in 2000. Even though these grants normally are not renewed, the Hotline obtained a second grant by committing to take special initiatives in ferreting out cases of elder abuse, predatory lending and Medicaid eligibility among seniors. Even more importantly, the State agreed this year for the first time to provide funding for the Seniors Hotline; the amount appropriated, \$150,000, will almost double the Hotline's previous support.

GLSP has obtained new funding for the representation of seniors in Columbus and Savannah in elder abuse cases. The Albany office became the grantee on an ELAP project within the past two years. ALAS has developed additional support for representation of seniors on predatory mortgage lending issues as well.

Momentum from the *Olmstead* case has led to the formation of the Disability Law and Policy Center, which is dedicated to statewide enforcement of the Supreme Court's groundbreaking decision. Grants from ALAS, IOLTA, and the Georgia Advocacy Office (the Protection and Advocacy Agency in Georgia) will enable the Center to represent individuals with physical or mental disabilities who are housed in nursing homes, personal care homes, or mental institutions.

Funding also has expanded for work with non-English speaking populations. ALAS's Hispanic Outreach Project received a grant from the Gozuieta Foundation. GLSP has been able to recruit student interns to work with migrant farmworkers. Because interns often have their own funding, their services represent an increase in resources without any additional cost. Catholic Social Services recently received an ABA grant to operate a volunteer program to represent children detained by INS.

Funding has been expanded to serve persons with AIDS. A recent grant allowed GLSP to expand services to include Augusta, for instance, in addition to Macon and Savannah. Funding to represent homeless persons and funding to review conditions in personal care homes also has increased.

A consortium of southeastern legal services programs, of which ALAS and GLSP are members, received a grant to provide housing counseling services. Funds under this grant have been allocated to three GLSP offices.

7. Leadership and Diversity Are Conscious Focuses within the Delivery System.

The organized bar and the two LSC-funded programs take a very deliberate and intentional approach to developing new leaders and maintaining diversity within the legal services delivery system. The organized bar has a long history of supporting legal services programs. The Access to Justice Committee and the Pro Bono Project, together with GLSP and ALAS, work to make sure that bar leaders are aware of and committed to meeting the legal services needs of low-income populations. Cultivating new Bar leaders who will continue to be supportive of civil legal services for the poor is an important aspect of leadership development.

The State's justice system as a whole is concerned about diversity. The Georgia Supreme Court's Commission on Equality, which succeeded the Commission on Gender and Equality, recently issued a report on women in the legal profession. The State Bar has a Committee on Women and Minorities in the Profession. The Atlanta Bar Association has a special project to place minority law students with Atlanta law firms. The Atlanta Bar also has created a partnership with the Law and Government Magnet program at Therrell High School, an inner-city school in Atlanta. For the past nine years, the Bar has placed Therrell students in paid summer internships with Atlanta law firms, including Atlanta Legal Aid. Interns have not only gone on to college, some are now in law school.

Promoting diversity and leadership within the two LSC-funded programs begins with recruitment of promising new and experienced attorneys. GLSP and ALAS have been successful in attracting diverse staff to the two programs. As their LSC funding applications show, both LSC programs have significant numbers of women and minorities on staff and in management positions. The two LSC programs demonstrate the importance of diversity in practical ways. In order to hire high quality and diverse staff, they recruit at schools and job fairs, like the NAPIL Public Interest Job Fair and the Southeast Minority Job Fair, where they can find a diverse student body with a commitment to public interest work. Both programs assisted with the repayment of student loans long before the issue gained prominence. Recognizing that many young lawyers, especially minority lawyers, could not afford to work at legal services because of student loans, both programs instituted loan repayment assistance programs over 20 years ago.

In addition, the programs nurture relationships with predominantly black law schools, promote their programs with placement and clinical staff at top law schools, advertise extensively through the Internet and in local newspapers, and maintain a network of e-mail contacts with persons who are in a position to advertise the availability of positions. Recently both programs were able to secure fellows under the NAPIL Fellowship program, a program that not only has high quality, committed candidates, but selects fellows with diversity in mind.

Once on board, new staff attorneys are provided careful supervision and receive significant training. Both programs provide opportunities for attorneys at the mid-range level and above to take on supervisory and other responsibilities, with a commensurate increase in compensation. GLSP and ALAS encourage all of their attorneys to be active in organized bar associations, including urging younger lawyers to join and be active in YLD activities. Many GLSP attorneys hold or have held leadership positions in the State Bar. GLSP's Executive Director has been on the State Bar Board of Governors since 1992, and has been one of its six at-large Executive Committee members since 1998. A GLSP Managing Attorney also is a member of the Board of Governors. ALAS staff provide leadership in the Atlanta Bar Association and its committees. Several ALAS staff and former staff have served as President of the Atlanta Bar Association.

Leadership development also occurs at the supervisory level. Supervisors often have the opportunity to attend training conferences sponsored by the Management Information Exchange (MIE) or other organizations, where they are exposed to new ideas and the national culture of legal services. New managers have the opportunity to attend MIE's "Manager in the Middle" training, and they occasionally attend regional Project Directors meetings or the annual NLADA Conference. GLSP recently sponsored a Supervisors Retreat for all supervisors in the program. Task forces and training events held by the two programs provide other opportunities to foster the development of new leaders.

Support staff in both programs have various promotional and advancement opportunities. GLSP is in the process of developing a training program for non-lawyer managers, and is recruiting a partner among the universities in Georgia to co-sponsor and certify the program.

Clients too have the opportunity to serve in leadership positions within the delivery system. The Georgia Clients Council, an organization supported in part by GLSP, conducts an annual Leadership Institute to train clients for leadership roles in their communities. The Leadership Institute addresses topics such as planning, setting goals and priorities, conducting meetings and speaking in public. While preparing members for public office is not one of the Institute's purposes, some eight to ten GCC or former GCC members have been elected to public office in their communities. Staff and members of the GCC have made presentations at NLADA's Annual Meeting, participated in LSC's National Client Conference, and served as members of boards of national legal service providers.

Emerging leaders within the organized bar and the LSC programs are encouraged to take the initiative in developing new programs or services. The YLD's Pro Bono Initiative and the ATJ Committee's efforts to obtain state funding for victims of domestic violence, described earlier, are just two examples. Another example is the Georgia ABC Project, modeled after the American Bar Association Business Law Section's "A Business Commitment" Project. With funding from multiple sources, the Georgia ABC Project recruits volunteer attorneys to represent community-based organizations in connection with their efforts to build affordable housing, create jobs and job training programs, support economic self-sufficiency and microenterprises, and preserve community land and cultural resources. The national Project sees the Georgia Project as a model for the nation on how to provide transactional legal services to community-based organizations in rural areas.

Within the LSC programs, staff members also have many opportunities to take leadership roles in developing new programs to serve specialized client groups. For instance, the Director of the Seniors Hotline was empowered to create a new delivery system for seniors in cooperation with the State Office on Aging. Another long time ALAS attorney created and now directs ALAS's Home Defense Program and has become a national expert on predatory lending. Another ALAS attorney was given the opportunity to create a Mental Health Project in response to needs of the institutionalized mentally ill. Other ALAS attorneys have developed new programs, like the Grandparents Project (for representation of grandparents adopting grandchildren they are caring for), the Cancer and ALS initiative (for expansion of AIDS representation to other disabling diseases), and the Hispanic Outreach Project (for increasing services to the Hispanic community through outreach and the Spanish Hotline). GLSP's Valdosta office, in collaboration with Valdosta State College, also has a "Grandparents Project." The College provides family support while GLSP staff provides legal representation.

GLSP has developed expertise and innovative services in other new areas as legal needs emerged, including disaster legal assistance (now collaborating closely with the State Bar's YLD when disasters strike); domestic violence services in collaboration with Family Advocacy services at military installations (Georgia being home to many military installations); Rural Housing (formerly Farmers Home) home foreclosure prevention; litigation of predatory lending claims using RICO and fraud theories; and special education.

Both LSC programs encourage innovation and initiative by offering attorneys at a certain level the opportunity to increase their salaries by taking on new levels of responsibility. Under ALAS's Attorney II program, eligible attorneys create individual plans that match their expertise and interest with the needs of the program. Almost all of the eligible staff attorneys who develop appropriate plans achieve this status. GLSP provides opportunities for staff attorneys to seek promotion to Supervising Attorney, Senior Staff Attorney, or Managing Attorney positions, with appropriate experience and as vacancies arise. In addition, GLSP offers internships, where young attorneys develop expertise in a specific area by working for a period of time with one of the program's Specialist Attorneys. Further, several young attorneys have been involved with the Leadership programs sponsored by their towns (*e.g.*, Leadership Augusta, Leadership Waycross).

8. Actively Involving the ATJ Committee in State Planning Is Our Next Step.

Current challenges for this State's justice system include serving Georgia's increasingly diverse population, integrating technology into the delivery and improvement of services, increasing overall resources, expanding access through better and more coordinated portals, bringing more providers into the planning process, and considering a uniform assessment protocol for the state justice system. The specific next step in the state planning process will be to formalize the involvement of the State Bar's Access to Justice Committee. Members of the Oversight Committee met recently with members of the ATJ Committee to brief them on state planning and explain the role they were being asked to assume. Preliminary discussions addressed a number of areas, including intake, the provision of advice and brief service, effective use of technology, increased use of self help, involvement of private attorneys, development of additional resources and configuration of a comprehensive, integrated delivery system. Members of both Committees agreed to meet again to identify other stakeholders, including clients, who should be part of further planning.

The Access to Justice Committee, in conjunction with the Oversight Committee, will consider convening a statewide planning and assessment conference, similar to the two planning meetings that have been held since the initiation of the state planning effort. The first, held in September 1999, was hosted by the Georgia Access to Justice Program. That conference identified gaps in services and stimulated ideas about new partnerships. In response, a directory of all providers was prepared and was subsequently placed on the Internet.

Another planning and assessment meeting was held in the Fall of 2000, this time hosted by the State Bar Committee on Women and Minorities in the Profession. The theme of this meeting was how to serve those who are not able to be served by LSC-funded programs and how to generate additional resources. Participants identified new immigrants, particularly children, as a group having unmet legal needs. In response, Catholic Social Services started a new program to assist children being held by immigration officials.

Like the conferences held in previous years, the purpose of the third planning and assessment conference would be to consider the overall effectiveness of the delivery system, determine whether there are any gaps in services and, if so, figure out how to meet them. An additional topic to be addressed would be whether stakeholders wish to come to agreement upon a uniform assessment protocol. As in the past, invitations would be sent to a broad and diverse group of interested persons and organizations, including LSC and non-LSC service providers, clients, private and public sector attorneys, judges, law professors, and representatives of client councils, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, battered women shelters and other interested parties.

9. The Greatest Obstacle We Face Is the Crisis Facing Indigent Criminal Defense.

The greatest obstacle facing the statewide legal services delivery system at the present time is that key supporters of legal services programs, such as the State Bar and the judiciary, have recently focused their attention in the criminal area due to what has become a crisis in Georgia's indigent defense system. The State Legislature's refusal to invest sufficient funds to support indigent defense, despite a constitutional mandate to do so, is not new. In the face of the State's intransigence, the Georgia Bar Foundation succumbed to pressure from the State Legislature some 12 years ago and diverted 40 percent of its IOLTA funds annually to indigent defense. Thus, Georgia bears the dubious distinction of being the first and only state in the nation to use IOLTA funds for the support of indigent defense.

The State Legislature's ongoing refusal to fund indigent defense programs is emblematic of the attitude that providers of civil legal services encounter when they seek state funding for their work. The political reality in Georgia is that the State Legislature is unwilling to fund general legal services for poor people. Faced with this political reality, supporters of legal services programs have learned to clothe their requests for state funding in the garb of "hot button" topics that have broad political support. The most notable example of this strategy was the request for an appropriation of \$2 million to fund legal services for victims of domestic violence. Significantly, the State Bar President and the ATJ Committee initiated the idea of approaching the Legislature with this funding request. Having proved the value of focusing on hot-button issues, supporters of legal services have used the same approach to obtain state funding for other politically popular programs, such as the Senior Legal Hotline and ombudsman programs.

By partnering with the ATJ Committee on state planning, the Oversight Committee expects to increase its ability to attract additional state funding by capitalizing on areas that enjoy broad political support. Plans are under way to try this strategy again in the next legislative session, this time in connection with an effort to have legal services lawyers included in a law school loan forgiveness program, which is being backed by the State's prosecutors, who see it as a means of attracting high quality law school graduates. The Director of ALAS serves on the Governor's task force that is studying this issue.

10. Only A Limited Cost-Benefit Analysis Has Been Undertaken To Date.

The state planning process has not yet reached a point where an extensive cost-benefit analysis would be beneficial. The Oversight Committee conducted a cost-benefit analysis on a more limited basis in conjunction with its consideration of a centralized, statewide intake system. The Committee felt that, at the present time, the benefits of centralized intake, as observed at the sites we visited, did not justify the high cost of such an approach. The Committee was concerned that centralized intake would take resources away from other critical services. The national assessment of hotline effectiveness, if available, might influence the Committee's current thinking on what to do about centralizing intake. It is our understanding that the report is in process but not yet complete.

11. As State Planning Becomes More Inclusive, Additional Resources May Be Needed.

As the Access to Justice Committee takes on a larger, more intentional role in state planning, we may need to devote additional resources to the process. Increased spending may be needed for technical assistance, paid staff, and outside consultant services. ATJ and Oversight Committee leadership have examined materials from other states, notably the Washington State Planning Resource Manual, for the purpose of determining what additional resources might be needed and to guide next steps.

Achievement of our goals related to the more extensive use of technology to link all GLSP and ALAS offices and the more focused pursuit of collaboration with other providers and stakeholders would be greatly enhanced by additional resources. Although a new TI grant recently awarded to ALAS and GLSP will help them revamp their joint web site, a larger grant proposal submitted by the two programs for infrastructure development was denied. The Committee will continue to look for additional resources to fund that proposal.

The Committee's evaluation of centralized intake in Georgia would benefit from the release of the national assessment on hotline effectiveness. It is our understanding that that assessment is not yet available. Resource development is another area that could itself use more resources and staffing.

II. TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE INTENDED OUTCOMES OF A COMPREHENSIVE, INTEGRATED, CLIENT-CENTERED LEGAL SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEM BEEN ACHIEVED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS/QUALITY; EFFICIENCY; EQUITY IN TERMS OF CLIENT ACCESS; GREATER INVOLVEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE PRIVATE BAR IN THE LEGAL LIVES OF CLIENTS; AND CLIENT-COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT?

While providers of civil legal services in Georgia still face many challenges and the State's delivery system does not yet meet the needs of all of our poor populations, we believe we have achieved a great deal in our State. As noted earlier, based on the directives we received from LSC in response to our 1998 planning report, we have focused our attention since 1999 primarily on technology, statewide intake, and resource development. The report we submitted in April 2000 described the delivery system's achievements in those areas. Likewise, the funding applications that GLSP and ALAS submitted to LSC this past summer set out the two programs' goals, objectives, and measurements for meeting the critical legal needs of the poor in Georgia. Finally, earlier sections of this report addressed topics that overlap with topics suggested for inclusion in Section II of this report. While we want our report to be as comprehensive as possible, we assume that LSC would want us to avoid needless repetition. Therefore, to the extent consistent with submission of a complete report, we have attempted to avoid repeating information that was provided elsewhere.

1. We Are Entering a New, More Aggressively Collaborative Phase in State Planning.

Georgia's statewide planning process is entering a new and critical phase. A key focus of this next phase will involve working collaboratively with the Access to Justice Committee and other stakeholders and providers to assure that gaps in legal services are being met. GLSP and ALAS have a long history of formal collaboration with each other and informal collaboration with other providers and stakeholders. Since the funding cutbacks in 1996 and, in particular, since LSC mandated the new state planning initiative in 1998, more structured collaboration with a larger number of stakeholders has become a necessity. What form this new partnering will take remains to be worked out by the ATJ and Oversight Committees.

2. Statewide Coordination of Efforts Is One of Our Greatest Strengths.

Coordination of efforts among the various legal services providers is an almost daily occurrence in nearly every substantive area that affects the poor. For example, battered women's shelters refer victims for representation on TPO's and divorces nearly every day. Ombudsmen all across the State regularly refer residents of nursing homes and personal care homes to ELAPs for protection against abuse. Agencies serving immigrant populations regularly refer their clients to legal services providers for assistance on family, consumer and housing issues. Thus, on a day to day basis, a variety of stakeholders and service providers coordinate on an informal basis in order to meet fundamental client needs.

More formal collaborative efforts since 1998 have resulted in dramatic examples of expanded access and services. The State Legislature's groundbreaking appropriation of \$2 million to fund legal services for victims of family violence was the result of collaboration

between the State Bar of Georgia, the LSC programs, pro bono projects, and other stakeholders. As a direct result of this appropriation, domestic violence shelters, working in conjunction with legal services providers (including the Georgia Law Center for the Homeless, a non-LSC provider), have been able to expand legal services to victims of family violence. Even immigrants and non-English speaking victims of family violence benefit from this funding. Collaboration with Family Service Centers and military bases has enabled GLSP to serve victims of domestic violence at military installations throughout the State. A series of Continuing Legal Education programs, developed through the joint efforts of GLSP, the State Bar, local bar associations and the judiciary, are used across the State as a means of recruiting volunteers.

The Internet Domestic Violence Court Preparation Project, which provides an interactive program that enables victims of domestic violence to prepare their own papers online and go to court to seek a protective order, also has expanded access. Each month over 500 persons visit this website, which can be found at www.glsptpoforms.org. The interactive feature is accessible at 45 locations throughout Georgia.

The growing Hispanic, Asian and other non-English-speaking populations have greater access to legal services because of the increased outreach and coordination among GLSP, ALAS, and other stakeholders serving these groups. Another vital tool in this effort is Language Line, which GLSP uses for an average of 500 minutes per month. Access to specialized disaster legal assistance has been enhanced within the last three years because of collaboration between the State Bar's Pro Bono Project, the State Bar's Younger Lawyers Division, and GLSP.

Community-based organizations have access to new business law services because of collaboration between pro bono projects, national groups such as NLADA, NAPIL, and Power of Attorney, and the LSC providers. The CED work is supported by the State Bar's new ABC Committee, which includes a variety of stakeholders from the private bar and corporate counsel. Between 1998-2001, some 58 new group clients were served or received expanded services.

The two statewide planning meetings mentioned earlier focused on gaps in service among particular client populations. New programs, using non-LSC providers, were developed to respond to these needs. For example, other entities, such as Families First, Georgia Access to Justice Project, Center for Children and Education, Georgia Rural-Urban Coalition, and the Women's Policy Group, have assumed responsibility for representing low-income clients' issues in the Georgia General Assembly. In addition, the Disability Law and Policy Center has been created to undertake strategies that the LSC providers can not use. Within the limitations of LSC regulations, ALAS and GLSP staff members also have responded to requests from Georgia legislators for comment and analysis on legislative proposals. Expansion of access through hotlines, educational materials, pro se assistance, and technology have been discussed in other sections.

Representation in class actions has been undertaken by other providers, including the Georgia Law Center for the Homeless, or by private lawyers with financial support from the Southern Poverty Law Center, or by major law firms. The Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law has stepped up its activity in Georgia. Private attorneys also have been asked to undertake complex cases that are beyond the resources of the LSC providers and to pursue strategies, such as attorneys fees, that the LSC providers cannot pursue.

Finding representation for prison inmates is often difficult. The Southern Center for Human Rights has taken on some of the jail/prison conditions litigation previously handled by GLSP and ALAS, but the law governing prisoners rights has dramatically deteriorated. The Southern Center has achieved notable successes concerning health care issues in both the Fulton County Jail and the DeKalb County Jail. The Georgia Access to Justice Project (GAJP), working with the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, represents women inmates in family law cases, a representation prohibited for LSC recipients.

Improving access for undocumented aliens has been more difficult. GLSP and ALAS represent these individuals to the extent allowed by the Kennedy Amendment. Limited additional resources are available from Catholic Social Services and the Latin American Association, though the reach of those organizations does not extend much beyond metro Atlanta. Grants have been made to various domestic violence providers to handle cases for aliens not eligible for representation by the LSC providers. Similarly, Catholic Social Services obtained an ABA grant to represent children in INS detention, again a representation prohibited for LSC recipients.

Since 1998, increased interaction and collaboration with other stakeholders has given the two LSC programs more opportunities to influence priorities and goals of other entities. For example, staff members have been appointed to Supreme Court commissions and task forces, and have become increasingly active as leaders or members of the State Bar, the State Bar Younger Lawyers Division, and local bar associations. Staff members also serve on boards of other providers and stakeholders and have been honored with awards for their leadership in these positions. Staff members also cultivate relationships with other entities, including the indigent defense community, mental health advocates and providers, universities and law schools, and foundations. All of this activity has produced tangible benefits in increasing services to clients.

3. The Quality of Legal Services for the Poor, Already High, Is Improving.

Legal services clients in Georgia receive high quality representation. Over the last three years, as new funding has enabled GLSP and ALAS to add new attorneys, the two programs have placed particular emphasis on attorney training as a key means of maintaining quality. Many of the programs' training sessions are open to volunteer attorneys and non-LSC attorneys. In addition, the programs have collaborated with the State Bar, the Institute for Continuing Legal Education, local and specialty bar associations, and the judiciary across the State to develop training programs that benefit volunteer and potential volunteer lawyers in more traditional CLE settings.

Technology also makes it easier to maintain high quality legal services. ALAS and GLSP negotiated a very favorable joint contract with Lexis, which is used both by staff and volunteer attorneys. Intranets developed by both programs allow an individual's "knowledge base" to be distributed throughout the organization with just a few strokes of the keyboard. Desktop access to the Internet also has put a vast array of resources at staff's fingertips.

Task forces are another means of helping the programs respond to emerging needs and new resources. Task forces now exist to support domestic violence, HIV/AIDS work, housing, consumer and public benefits work.

4. Relative Equity of Client Access to Services Has Improved Since 1998.

Although the Oversight Committee does not have baseline data from 1998, the Committee's assessment is that access to services has increased in the areas of greatest need since 1998. These areas include non-English-speaking clients; clients, especially seniors, who need only brief service and advice; clients who need only pro se assistance; clients whose needs are met by downloading information from the Internet; clients who can be reached only by affirmative outreach; clients who have disabilities; and clients who are migrant workers. Some of these areas are addressed below; others are addressed elsewhere in this report.

Immigrant Populations. Non-English speaking clients are among those most in need of greater access to legal services. A stakeholders conference last year, sponsored by the State Bar Committee on Women and Minorities in the Profession, identified Georgia's immigrant populations as particularly underserved. Based in part on the findings of that conference, Catholic Social Services received an ABA grant to represent children held in custody by INS. The two LSC-funded programs also have begun to increase their efforts within the non-English speaking community. ALAS has begun to expand its focus to include outreach not only to Atlanta's Hispanic community but also to its Asian community, and has been approved to receive a NAPIL Fellow for that purpose. GLSP applied for funding for a special citizenship discrimination project for migrant farm workers, but did not get the grant. Further translations of brochures and other materials and new pro se clinics are also under consideration. A new provider coming to Georgia, MALDEF, is expected to greatly enhance services to this population.

Bilingual Services. GLSP and ALAS negotiated a joint contract with Language Line, a service that enables English-speaking staff to locate translators for clients quickly and easily. This has been particularly helpful in compensating for the scarcity of bilingual attorneys outside the metro Atlanta area. GLSP, ALAS and other programs make printed documents available in Spanish, including retainer agreements and community education materials. As the Asian population has grown, service providers have begun translating documents and brochures into Korean and other Asian languages.

Clients with Disabilities. Recently a new organization, the Disability Law and Policy Center (DLPC), has been created with financial support from ALAS and the Georgia Bar Foundation to provide and coordinate disability representation around the State. One special focus has been statewide enforcement of *Olmstead*, which requires community-based health services under the ADA. To that end, the Center has convened a statewide Strategy Work Group, composed of representatives from several providers, to address *Olmstead* issues. The Work Group has developed a Community Living Outreach Kit, which informs advocates for disabled persons about how to apply for community services. Special training is also being planned. Finally, the DLPC coordinated the filing of a combined administrative complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of HHS on *Olmstead* issues.

Migrant Farmworkers. The Migrant Project has restaffed since 1998 and revamped its priorities and work plans each year since then. It has identified and reached out to farmworker-serving organizations, such as the People of the Road Coalition, and various churches across the State that serve farmworkers. The Project also has collaborated on outreach and litigation with farmworker projects in other states, especially Texas and Florida. The current legal staff of the

Project have substantial experience, gained both during law school and since graduation, in dealing with the special challenges of serving farmworkers. All staff members are bilingual. The Project also has contracted with a former GLSP litigation director to provide specialized litigation assistance, a step which has significantly impacted the quality of litigation on behalf of these clients. The Project has expanded its educational materials, available both in Spanish and English, as well as its community education sessions. The Migrant Project has become increasingly successful in recruiting summer law interns who are either paid by another source or who are willing to volunteer during one of the peaks of activity for the Project.

5. The Availability of a Full Range of Services Has Improved Since 1998.

Delivery of a full range of legal services has been a main focus of the Oversight Committee since its inception. Expansion in the range of services has been accomplished in the following areas:

Hotlines. Hotlines developed since 1998 have improved the relative access of several groups. ALAS began a hotline specifically set up to provide in-depth and locally focused legal advice to tenants within Fulton County. As the state's most populous county and the county with the most units of low income housing, Fulton has a particularly high volume of tenants calling for legal help. The new hotline helps balance their access to services. A second hotline, the statewide Seniors Legal Hotline, provides seniors with information, advice and brief services in areas of concern to them. In some instances, callers may receive written information through a follow up mailing. If the caller needs ongoing legal representation, the hotline refers the case to ALAS, GLSP, or a private attorney. The hotline technology allows callers to be transferred directly from the Seniors Hotline to the Senior Citizens Law Project and vice versa. The State of Georgia pays the cost of long-distance service.

Pro Se Support. Since 1998, ALAS has established pro se clinics in the State's two most populous counties, Fulton and DeKalb. Instituted in response to the superior courts in both counties and funded by their respective county governments, the pro se clinics advise pro se litigants about court procedures and how to present their cases. The clinics may refer pro se litigants to ALAS or to private attorneys who have expressed a willingness to accept referrals in such situations. These clinics provide welcome relief to these two courts, which have the highest volume of cases in the State. Pro se assistance also is a means of ensuring equitable access to the court system. Pro se litigants in other counties also benefit because these two clinics have developed model forms and pleadings that are available online for use throughout the rest of the State.

The Oversight Committee has supported efforts to encourage other courts to create similar clinics staffed by ALAS or GLSP attorneys or by volunteer attorneys. This was one of the topics addressed at last year's "Legal Services University." For the past three years, the Supreme Court's Pro Se Litigants' Committee has undertaken a study of the problems associated with pro se cases in Georgia and has initiated a variety of activities in response, including training for court clerks and magistrate judges. The Director of GLSP serves on that Committee. Establishing court based pro se clinics requires local support and cooperation. That support may build as judges from Fulton and DeKalb share their positive assessment of these clinics with other judges throughout the State.

Class Actions and Restricted Activities. Elsewhere in this report we have described steps taken to ensure that poor populations have representation in the State Legislature and that class action representation is available when that is in the client's best interest.

Joint Website. As detailed earlier, the Oversight Committee established a technology subcommittee to consider how the two LSC programs could provide services in a more integrated and comprehensive way. Subcommittee discussions lead to the creation of a joint website, which will soon be improved with a TI grant from LSC. The website should significantly increase access to legal education and self-help materials for all low-income persons in Georgia.

Intake. Another subcommittee established by the Oversight Committee spent about 15 months evaluating the feasibility of a statewide screening and intake system. The Intake Committee's analysis is discussed at length in section III 4.

Financial Resources. The third area to which the Oversight Committee has devoted much of its energy over the past few years is the development of new resources. Believing that the most effective way to offset the concentration of legal and financial resources in Atlanta may be to increase resources overall, the Oversight Committee established a Resource Development Committee. The Resource Committee commissioned Dennis Dorgan of the Management Information Exchange to prepare a report on (1) how to address disparities in funding levels from one region of the State to another, and (2) how to increase legal resources for the State as a whole.

Mr. Dorgan's report noted that both programs had significantly decreased their dependence on LSC funds and had increased the amount of support they received from the private bar. He confirmed the Committee's belief that it was very unlikely that the State Legislature would provide funding for legal services in the form of general appropriations or filing fee add-ons. Mr. Dorgan specifically considered whether a joint fundraising campaign was a viable solution to funding disparities between metro Atlanta and the rest of the State. He concluded that Atlanta lawyers contributed to ALAS because of its history and reputation in the Atlanta legal community. For that reason, he believed that it would be extremely difficult to transmute this organizational loyalty into support for a statewide bar campaign. Instead, he suggested other ways to increase resources and bolster GLSP's fundraising efforts. One such means would be to put more emphasis on peer to peer solicitation from lawyers in GLSP's service area.

Mr. Dorgan's report recommended that the Committee undertake joint initiatives for *cy pres* awards and corporate funders. In addition, Mr. Dorgan recommended a public education campaign to inform large segments of the bar and the general community about legal services. He also recommended that ALAS and GLSP pursue the possibility of contracting with the State to handle specific types of cases, such as disability matters and welfare to work issues for TANF recipients.

The two programs began implementing Mr. Dorgan's recommendations immediately. Already their efforts have met with success. Perhaps the most dramatic success was the receipt of two new *cy pres* awards in the amount of \$250,000 each from the federal district court in Atlanta. When the director of ALAS became aware of the opportunity to apply for a share of

the *cy pres* funds, he alerted GLSP, resulting in separate awards to both organizations. Additional unused funds are likely to become available in the case; the Court has already stated that these additional funds will be awarded to ALAS and GLSP. The programs received *cy pres* grants of \$1 million each in 1996, the largest *cy pres* awards ever given to a legal services program.

Significant progress has been made in developing a public education campaign of the kind recommended by Mr. Dorgan. Through the collaborative efforts of the Access to Justice Committee, the Individual Rights Section of the State Bar, and GLSP, the Lawyers Foundation of Georgia awarded a \$10,000 challenge grant to develop a public education campaign aimed at lawyers outside metro Atlanta. A public relations firm will be engaged to develop a hard-hitting one-hour presentation for local bar associations. The presentation will describe the legal needs of low-income Georgians, what legal services lawyers do, and how private attorneys can help. This effort has greatly benefited from the national “Message Campaign” research and development that has been sponsored by the Project for the Future of Equal Justice.

Establishing ties with corporate legal departments is a step toward creating corporate fundraising opportunities. The Director of the Pro Bono Project, together with the directors of GLSP and ALAS, recently made a presentation at the annual Corporate Counsel Institute, in which they highlighted pro bono opportunities for corporate legal departments.

The two programs have had extended discussions with officials from the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) about the possibility of a statewide contract for the representation of public benefits clients on disability cases and other matters. The newly designated Commissioner of DFACS, who had been the legislative advocate for both programs in the mid-1970’s, has indicated that he is interested in contracting with the programs to develop a pilot project to help disabled DFACS clients obtain Social Security and SSI disability benefits. The project would involve both direct services for clients and training of DFACS staff on Social Security and SSI issues. The project also could involve using the Georgia Senior Hotline to provide services to DFACS clients regardless of their age.

6. The Legal Services Delivery System Avoids Inefficiency and Duplication.

The Oversight Committee believes that the present system is efficient and that duplication of services is kept to a minimum. In recent years, in response to scarce resources, there has been a conscious effort among funders at every level to discourage duplication and to reward innovation and efficiency. The Oversight Committee believes that this trend has motivated providers of legal services to avoid duplication to an even greater extent than they already were doing on their own. Funders have been clear that all applicants, including providers of legal services, must collaborate more effectively if they wish to attract new funding. As a result, the Oversight Committee sees no glaring inefficiencies or duplications in the delivery system, and thinks the two LSC-funded programs, along with the private bar and specialized organizations, work closely together in ways that enable them to avoid or minimize duplication. Specific examples of those cooperative efforts are replete in this document.

7. The Use of Private Lawyers in the Delivery of Legal Services to Low-Income Individuals Has Increased.

Earlier we described the integral role that the private bar plays in the statewide system for the delivery of legal services to the poor. That role has significantly expanded since 1998. Private attorneys now provide more financial support and more pro bono services than ever before. Their increased support allows the development of new projects, which in turn lead to additional pro bono work.

First, the volume of pro bono support has increased significantly. More attorneys volunteer in Georgia than ever before. While part of this increase is attributable to a persistent emphasis on the solicitation and recognition of volunteer attorneys, credit also must go to the development of new and creative approaches for involving private lawyers in the delivery of legal services to the poor. A number of these have been described earlier, such as the “ABC Project” and the increased services for victims of domestic violence and victims of disasters. A few others are mentioned below.

The opportunity to stabilize family units and increase family income is difficult for some lawyers to turn down. Since 1998, volunteer lawyers from a prominent law firm have been helping grandparents adopt the grandchildren they are raising. The Grandparents Project, begun by ALAS, not only brings stability to the family, it can also dramatically increase the family’s income through Georgia Adoption Assistance benefits. Grandparent adoption proceedings have been initiated in Atlanta as well as in Augusta, where the same law firm partners with GLSP’s Augusta office. Over 160 children have been adopted since the Project began. In an exciting new development, a large corporate legal department has teamed up with its outside counsel to handle adoption cases through the Project. This marks the first time in Georgia that a corporate legal department has taken on a firm pro bono project.

In another first for Georgia, a law firm has hired the former Director of the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation to serve as the firm’s full-time pro bono counsel. Having an attorney who is nationally known for her pro bono expertise and whose sole responsibility is to ensure that firm attorneys provide pro bono services represents an extraordinary commitment to pro bono service that will be felt throughout the State. Already, the firm’s volunteer efforts have increased dramatically.

Another remarkable show of support from the private bar is the number of law firms that have sent their own associates to work at ALAS for four months at the firm's expense. Associates from six law firms have served as fellows at ALAS, where they function as staff attorneys, representing clients on high priority matters such as evictions or cases involving domestic violence.

Several law firms in Georgia also have provided financial support for NAPIL Fellows placed at ALAS or GLSP. Projects undertaken by NAPIL Fellows sometimes have the effect of increasing pro bono services. For example, a NAPIL Fellow working at GLSP uses the ABC Project to find lawyers to represent local rural groups on community development issues. Last year, a NAPIL Fellow at ALAS recruited private attorneys to assist her in the representation of mentally ill clients. The firm sponsoring that NAPIL Fellow also became an active and indispensable partner in litigating the *Olmstead* case before the United States Supreme Court.

Another Georgia firm sponsored NAPIL Fellows whose project was to create an information center for pro se litigants involved in family law cases in DeKalb County. This project also is likely to lead to increased pro bono representation as well as contracts with private attorneys. Two other firms have sponsored a NAPIL Fellow in a project designed to increase representation of delinquent children in benefits and education matters. Assistance from the private bar will be part of this project.

III. ARE THE BEST ORGANIZATIONAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONFIGURATIONS AND APPROACHES BEING USED?

1. The Configuration of Programs Delivering Services to Low Income Individuals is Described Below.

Legal services are provided to low-income Georgians by the two LSC programs, numerous nonprofit organizations that provide specialized services or serve specific populations, and the private bar.

LSC Programs. LSC is already familiar with the size, funding sources, areas of responsibility and governance of ALAS and GLSP, which receive about 45% of their combined revenues from LSC. Another 20% or so of their general funding comes from IOLTA, United Way and donations. Most of the remainder of the funding that the two programs receive is earmarked for specific client populations or specific kinds of cases. For example, the programs receive over \$1.5 million in funding for victims of domestic violence and about that same amount for seniors, ombudsman programs, and residents of nursing homes and personal care homes. Notably, since the LSC funding cuts in 1996, the percentage of the two programs' funding that is targeted has grown significantly. Increasingly, donors are specifying how their money must be spent. Targeted funding means that, in addition to the "traditional" practice areas, both programs provide services for specific vulnerable populations. These include victims of domestic violence, seniors, homeless persons, migrant workers, people with AIDS, the mentally ill and disabled, Hispanics and other immigrant populations and homeowners subject to predatory mortgage lending.

Specialized Nonprofits. For the most part, other non-profit providers in Georgia direct their resources entirely at specific groups. The extent to which the delivery system meets the needs of each group largely depends on whether funding sources are committed to that group's interests. For example, the State Legislature's annual appropriation of \$2 million for victims of family violence means that significant resources are available to serve that population. In addition to amounts allocated to GLSP and ALAS, over \$500,000 of these funds are distributed annually to shelters (for victims generally) or to organizations like the Georgia Law Center for the Homeless (for particular segments of the population such as homeless victims). Determining the amount of funding that the specialized nonprofits devote to legal services depends on what is included in "legal services." Under Georgia law, shelter personnel may help victims of family violence prepare pleadings and may accompany them to court as well. Therefore, much of a shelter's general funding arguably could be considered to be devoted to legal services.

Private Bar. The private bar's contribution to the delivery system is twofold. First, there are the many hours of actual work done by volunteer attorneys. As observed earlier in this report, the extent of volunteer efforts in Georgia is extensive. Second, there is the coordinating

structure that provides support for the various pro bono programs and activities. These include the State Bar Pro Bono Project, which provides overall coordination at a statewide level, as well as two independent pro bono programs, the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyers Foundation (AVLF) and the DeKalb Volunteer Lawyers Foundation (DVLf), which coordinate volunteer efforts in two urban Atlanta counties. The Pro Bono Project receives funding from the State Bar and GLSP. AVLF and DVLf are funded mainly by filing fee add-ons and, to a lesser extent, by state and federal grants and private donations. The two LSC programs have staff who coordinate volunteer efforts in all but the two counties covered by AVLF and DVLf. Other nonprofit organizations, such as the Georgia Law Center for the Homeless, have volunteer lawyer components, but none is as large as those supporting the two LSC programs. Thousands of Georgia attorneys regularly accept volunteer cases from AVLF, DVLf and the LSC programs. In addition, as documented in earlier sections, many attorneys participate in special pro bono efforts like the ABC project, the Grandparents Project, and the Fellowship Program.

Quantifying the exact extent of the private bar's pro bono efforts is impossible with existing data. Although the State Bar asks lawyers to report their pro bono activities, reporting is optional and only about six per cent of attorneys respond. In any event, the survey is not limited to services for low income clients, nor does it ask for an estimate of the time spent on pro bono representation. Such incomplete data will not allow any meaningful estimate of the volume or value of pro bono services.

2. A Merger of the Two Programs Was Given Serious Consideration and Rejected.

The Committee started with the basic belief that it makes sense to have two LSC programs in Georgia structured around service to the Atlanta metropolitan area and to the rest of the State. Georgians make that same division politically, economically and culturally, in much the same way that New York is thought of as either New York City or the rest of the State. Not only did Committee members think the division seemed obvious and natural, it also made sense given the focus of the two programs.

Atlanta Legal Aid is clearly primarily urban centered with the legal problems that the focus implies, while Georgia Legal Services has a more rural focus which in turn causes its emphasis to be on different issues. That is not to say that some issues do not overlap, and in fact the two programs collaborate on joint solutions when they do. It is only to say that there seemed good reason to have two programs in Georgia, each with a special focus.

Despite the Committee's basic belief that the present structure seemed appropriate, the Committee discussed alternative structures, and in particular merger of the two programs, at a number of its meetings. Based on information about mergers in other states, the Committee identified a number of short-term problems that might result from a merger - - the disruption of client representation, the displacement of staff, the difficulty of integrating two different salary scales and benefit packages, the challenge of developing new personnel policies, and the fact that GLSP has a union and ALAS does not. The Committee also considered the possible long-term risks of a merger, such as loss of key staff and local financial support.

The Committee then weighed the potential short-term and long-term risks against the possible benefits of a merger. The Committee considered whether a merger was likely to reduce overall administrative costs. Unable to find any published analysis of the financial impact of

mergers of LSC programs in other states, the Committee had to rely on anecdotal information. This information suggested that, except for mergers involving small programs, significant savings did not occur. Indeed, project directors who supported the merger of their own programs did not identify administrative savings as part of the rationale for their support. In some cases, merged programs have required more administrative support, not less.

In the absence of hard financial data from other mergers, the Committee had to rely on its own assessment of potential savings. The Committee concluded that, while the two programs have separate financial, technical and administrative personnel, the merged program would almost certainly require more administrative and support personnel than either program now has. In fact, it seemed quite possible that a merged program would require more of such personnel than the two programs in combination now have. Moreover, if individual staff members were asked to take on significant additional responsibility as a result of the merger, their compensation might have to be increased commensurately, thereby offsetting any savings that otherwise might have been realized.

The Committee also took into account the affirmative steps that the two LSC programs have taken to avoid and minimize duplication. These include over 25 years of shared litigation, advocacy and training efforts, as well as more recent examples, such as the joint Lexis contract, the joint agreement with Language Line, the shared use of a consultant to advise on 403(b) retirement options, the creation of a joint website and other joint technology efforts. The Committee also noted the programs' extensive record of collaboration with other providers and the likelihood of greater coordination in the future due to the involvement of the State Bar's Access to Justice Committee.

The Committee gave very careful consideration to whether merger would be in the best interest of the programs' clients. The Committee noted that the two programs serve very different kinds of client populations, one urban and the other mainly rural. Members of the Committee expressed doubts that a single program could adequately serve two such different populations without short-changing one of them. Finally, the Committee considered whether merger was likely to improve client service. It was noted that both LSC programs are held in high regard both locally and nationally because of the high quality and innovative legal services they provide, an opinion voiced by LSC on numerous occasions. In light of the high quality of services already being provided, it seemed unlikely that a merger would result in any significant improvement in the quality of client representation. Thus, after careful analysis, the Committee concluded that the potential long-term benefits of a merger were speculative at best and that a merger of the two programs was not likely to result in any tangible benefit to the legal services delivery system or the programs' clients.

After considering the short term and long term effects of a possible merger, the Committee's initial instinct was confirmed: division of service areas between Atlanta and the rest of the State is a natural and logical one which has led to the provision of accessible and high quality legal services. For that reason, the Committee believes strongly that it should be maintained.

3. Duplication of Capacities and Services Is Kept to A Minimum.

The Committee believes that duplication of capacity and services is kept to a minimum

due in part to the vigilance of funding sources and in part to the sharing of resources that already occurs. As noted earlier, funding sources discourage duplication by refusing to fund unnecessary, inefficient or duplicative proposals. Likewise, limited resources make efficiency a necessity.

The Committee is hopeful that the involvement of the Access to Justice Committee will be an additional mechanism for eliminating significant duplication and encouraging sharing of services where appropriate. Examples of sharing already exist. For instance, the associates' fundraising campaign, which solicited contributions from associates at Atlanta's major law firms, benefited a number of recipients. Rather than having each individual recipient administer the campaign for itself, one recipient, ALAS, volunteered to administer the campaign jointly on behalf of all recipients. Large providers like GLSP and ALAS may be in a position to share a variety of services with smaller organizations. For example, they could offer to provide accounting support for smaller providers, as ALAS has done in the past and has offered to do again. Also, non-LSC providers are invited to send staff to trainings sponsored by GLSP and ALAS, minimizing their own training costs. Further, participating in shared project development and grant-writing is another efficiency measure.

4. The Delivery System Has Had Many Innovations Since 1998.

Numerous innovative delivery mechanisms have been developed since 1998. Although most have been mentioned in other contexts elsewhere in this report, this section will focus on the innovative nature of these mechanisms.

Expanded Seniors Hotline. The Georgia Seniors Hotline came up with an innovative proposal when it applied for a renewal of its federal grant last year. As a result, a grant that was expected to come to an end after two years has been renewed for three more years. The proposal was to use the hotline to target three areas that are of particular concern among seniors - elder abuse, predatory mortgage lending and QMB Medicaid coverage. Under the new program design, seniors who call the hotline are asked about problems in these areas regardless of the issue that prompted their call to the Hotline. In addition, the Hotline has created an Advisory Committee composed of seniors providers from across the State, who will ensure that the Hotline is responding to statewide needs. At its very first meeting, the Advisory Committee came up with new ideas on how to make more seniors, especially those in rural areas, aware of the Hotline and the services it provides.

Olmstead Initiatives. A new coalition of providers has launched a statewide effort to enforce *Olmstead*. The coordinated effort that led to the formation of the Disability Law and Policy Center (DLPC) was itself innovative. Even more innovative are the two approaches the DLPC is using to effectuate the promise of *Olmstead*. First, the DLPC has identified lay advocates around the State and trained them to enforce *Olmstead* using a specially developed Community Living Outreach Kit. Second, after individual actions proved ineffective in getting relief, the DLPC coordinated the filing of a statewide administrative complaint with the Office for Civil Rights of the HHS.

Pro Se Efforts. Pro se efforts have been expanded in creative ways. The State's most populous county, Fulton County, was the first to create a Family Law Information Center (FLIC), an innovative system that makes form pleadings available to clients over the Internet for

use in family law cases. Now another large urban county, DeKalb County, has instituted the same kind of program. In addition, pro se litigants in Fulton County can consult with a Legal Aid attorney about their case free of charge. Over 1000 such litigants were served in the last year. In Fulton County, FLIC's services, including the attorney consultations, are available to, and are in fact used by, litigants from other counties.

Domestic Violence. GLSP's Internet Domestic Violence Court Preparation Project enables victims of domestic violence to prepare the pleadings they need to seek a temporary protective order anywhere in the State. The project involved coordination between GLSP and other service providers. Victims of family violence can now go to family violence shelters, victim-witness assistance offices, GLSP and ALAS offices, and other crisis help locations and can use an interactive computer program to prepare pleadings by themselves or with minimal assistance. GLSP staff provide the technical assistance for the sites and work with local domestic violence task forces to help coordinate service delivery at the local level among law enforcement, social services, courts, mental health services, and others. The petition, order, and other related forms developed for the DV Project have been adopted by the Supreme Court as well as by the Georgia Temporary Protective Order Registry, which is an online resource enabling law enforcement personnel to provide better enforcement of TPO's. The forms satisfy interstate requirements for nationwide enforcement as well as the requirements of the Brady Law.

Military Outreach. GLSP has developed partnerships with Family Service offices and other appropriate entities on military bases around the State to help coordinate services for victims of family violence connected to military personnel. This initiative may become a prototype for the nation and GLSP staff have written about it in the *Clearinghouse Review*. GLSP also has developed a replicable continuing legal education program that has been presented in many towns around Georgia for judges, lawyers, law enforcement personnel, and others concerning the legal, social, and other aspects of domestic violence. This has resulted in increased numbers of volunteers.

Technology Exchange. The ABA's Technology Exchange Project proved successful in providing legal services providers with computers when law firms upgraded their computer systems. What is particularly innovative about the Georgia TEP that is now getting under way is that hardware will go to community groups that collaborate with legal services providers but do not provide legal services themselves. As a general rule, the equipment that large law firms replace is significantly more up to date than the equipment that most nonprofit legal services providers and related community groups now use. For instance, some of the larger law firms in Atlanta will be replacing Pentium II machines with Pentium III's and will be in a position to donate their used equipment. Another particularly innovative feature of the Georgia TEP will be the solicitation of pro bono technical support from the IT departments of large firms. To our knowledge, this may be the first time ever that a legal services program has attempted in a systematic way to tap into this resource.

Development of Listservs. The Pro Bono Project Director has developed a number of listservs which connect interest groups such as pro bono coordinators and their volunteers throughout the state, transactions lawyers and the ABC project, volunteer lawyers and legal service program staff, and GLSP and volunteer lawyers who will provide legal assistance following a disaster. These listservs have facilitated case placements, improved the quality of

representation, provided updated information on developments both with the various projects themselves and with the relevant case law and statutes.

Transactional Legal Services. Since 1998, GLSP and the State Bar's Pro Bono Project have dramatically expanded the transactional services available to community-based organizations throughout rural Georgia. This has tapped the willingness and interests of business lawyers to do pro bono work, a previously unutilized resource among the private bar. The American Bar Association's Business Law Section now considers Georgia's program to be a model for the country in how to deliver transactional services to rural areas. Presentations on the program have been made to the ABA Business Law Section's annual meetings, and will be made to NLADA's Annual Meeting in Miami, November 2001. Over the last three years, GLSP lawyers and volunteer attorneys have provided assistance for community-based organizations in almost 100 cases or matters. In 2001, GLSP offered to host the national ABC Project.

Community Economic Development. GLSP's CED team has developed a plan to provide more training to GLSP and volunteer attorneys, and to develop additional resources to expand this area. The CED team brought on a NAPIL Fellow, bringing to two the number of full-time attorneys working in GLSP's community economic development practice area.

Migrant Farmworkers. GLSP's Migrant Farmworkers Project has developed several new publications in Spanish and English for its clients and potential clients, including booklets about right under the H-2(a) program. GLSP staff have collaborated with migrant farmworkers legal services programs in Texas to distribute this information to arriving Mexican farmworkers. In addition, GLSP's staff have publicized their services widely to churches, migrant service agencies, and other interested persons in Georgia. This more widespread and energetic outreach has resulted in additional clients seeking legal assistance.

AIDS Projects. GLSP has developed a third specialized AIDS Law project in its Augusta office. For the last several years, Ryan White funding has supported similar project in GLSP's Savannah and Macon offices. Augusta has a large medical center and is therefore a destination for many rural victims of AIDS. Beginning in 2000, GLSP developed a partnership with the St. Stephens Ministry in Augusta to provide the legal assistance that clients in this area need. The two legal service programs have a joint, statewide task force on AIDS issues, coordinating the new project with those in Macon, Savannah, and the long established AIDS Legal Project in Atlanta, which has recently expanded its services to clients with other life threatening diseases, such as cancer and ALS.

Nursing Home Abuse. In 2000, ALAS's Ombudsman program conducted a special study on abuse in nursing homes, entitled *The Silenced Voice Speaks Out*. The purpose of the study was to investigate the extent and causes of abuse in nursing homes and the extent to which Georgia state regulators properly addressed such abuse. The Georgia study was one of only two such studies funded nationwide. Ombudsmen did intensive interviews of residents using a sophisticated instrument developed with the aid of a national consultant. The study documented serious and pervasive abuse in Georgia's nursing homes. In response to the study, the State of Georgia has created a special regulatory unit with new protocols for investigating complaints.

Elder Abuse. Within the last three years, two new elder abuse projects have been developed in GLSP's Columbus and Savannah offices with funding under the federal Victims of Crime Act. These projects have reached out to new audiences, such as Adult Protective Service, hospitals, other medical personnel and even banks, to provide information about this often unrecognized problem, and to offer assistance with the legal issues. Media attention as well as several highly publicized successful jury trials have begun to significantly raise awareness in these communities to this often hidden problem. After receiving a private foundation grant through the ABA Commission on Legal Problems of the Elderly, the Director of the Statewide Seniors Legal Hotline and the Legal Services Provider for the State, developed brochures and a training manual to instruct domestic violence shelters on how to help seniors who have been subjected to elder abuse. Training was provided at the 1999 statewide conference of the Georgia Commission on Family Violence and at numerous shelters. Brochures have been distributed to shelters across the state.

Pro Bono Counsel. An Atlanta law firm has recently hired a pro bono counsel whose sole responsibility is to facilitate the firm's pro bono work. It is the first time a Georgia firm has committed to having a full time attorney with such status in charge of pro bono. Creating a full-time position allows pro bono coordination to become something more than an add-on to the job of a regular staff member who is still accountable for billable hours. Awarding counsel status to this position makes a strong statement about the firm's commitment to pro bono work. The result has been a dramatic increase in the number of pro bono cases the firm has handled both as referrals from the two LSC programs and from the ABC Project. In addition, since the creation of the pro bono counsel position, the firm has entered into a joint effort with one of its major clients, BellSouth, to handle adoptions through the Grandparents Program. Having a corporate legal department make such a commitment is also a first in Georgia.

Eviction Defense Project. One of Atlanta's most prestigious law firms has begun to handle cases referred through the ALAS Landlord Tenant Hotline. Legal Aid staff provided training for the firm's volunteers. The project is innovative in a number of ways. First, the firm's lawyers will handle eviction cases, ordinarily the kind of cases which, because of their emergency nature, lawyers, especially those who do not regularly practice in this area, usually will not volunteer to do. Second, by acting as a sophisticated screening mechanism, the Hotline will play an essential role in making the project work. The Hotline must perform the critical function of determining, in light of the client and the nature of the case, whether the case is appropriate for referral to a private law firm.

Fellowships. Six law firms now participate in an Associates' Fellowship Program. These firms send associates to ALAS, typically for four months, while continuing to pay their regular salary. These associates have provided significant additional help in regular areas of practice like representation of tenants in evictions and battered spouses in divorces. Part of the most recent Fellow's assignment is to create the Georgia Technology Exchange Program. She also is helping the ABC committee in developing an online database of CED forms to serve as a resource for volunteer transactional attorneys statewide.

Disaster Relief. Other innovations since 1998 include expansion of services via collaboration with the Younger Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia on the delivery of disaster legal assistance to victims of hurricanes and tornadoes. The most recent invocation of this project occurred in February 2001 following several tornadoes in southwest Georgia. GLSP

and YLD lawyers staffed Disaster Assistance Centers and provided information and assistance on public benefits (GLSP lawyers) and insurance issues (the private attorneys).

Innovations Explored and Rejected

The Oversight Committee considered and rejected a statewide centralized intake system. A subcommittee, composed of staff and board members from both programs, spent about 15 months examining the intake systems currently in place in Georgia, studying and visiting statewide and regional intake/screening programs in other parts of the country, and reviewing material available from LSC. The committee also examined the technology used in other states to assess its usefulness in Georgia. Seven committee members, including ALAS's Executive Director, made site visits to five states to examine statewide and regional screening systems, and their reports were the subject of several committee discussions.

After careful review of the data, the Intake Committee recommended that our programs should not create a statewide hotline for general intake at this time. Committee members were convinced that such a system should only be implemented if it were done well. The Committee was aware of systems that had been implemented improperly and had to be revised. The Committee decided that proper implementation, based on the Washington State example, would require approximately \$4 million for Georgia.

Additionally, the Committee was surprised to discover, based on its site visits, that even in states that have mature centralized intake systems, many clients still accessed their local legal services programs by making local contact; for instance, one staff member in Washington indicated that less than half of her cases came from hotline intake.

Further, the Intake Committee believed that the creation of a statewide hotline intake system and the major commitment of resources involved should not be undertaken without more involvement by other stakeholders who also would be affected. Such a system should not be "owned" by the two LSC-funded programs, nor should it even necessarily be run by those two programs. There was some thought moreover that additional funding was crucial to creating such a system and that developing significant new funds would take a commitment by other partners in the statewide justice community.

The Oversight Committee agreed and decided instead to concentrate on improving referrals between programs and to continue to monitor emerging telecommunications vehicles that could improve current intake operations. To further this approach, the two programs applied for the TI grants outlined elsewhere in this report to support statewide enhancements that would have further facilitated telecommunications and created efficiencies in the programs' communications systems (including intake). In addition, there was interest in continuing to use hotline models to respond to particular needs.

CONCLUSION

Preparation of this report has been an instructive activity requiring the Oversight Committee to examine every aspect of the State's two LSC-funded programs as well as their interaction with one another and with other stakeholders and providers. Having completed this

assessment, the Committee looks forward to reaping the benefits of its new partnership with the Access to Justice Committee.

Respectfully submitted by the Joint Oversight Committee, whose members are listed below, this 17th day of September, 2001.

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Harold T. Daniel, Jr.
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